

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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Testimony of Michelle Cruz, Esq., State Victim Advocate Transportation Committee Wednesday, February 23, 2011

Good afternoon Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. For the record, my name is Michelle Cruz and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

Proposed Senate Bill No. 818, *An Act Requiring Increased Penalties for Certain Motor Vehicle Offenses (Support)*

Proposed House Bill No. 6131, *An Act Increasing the Fine for Operating a Motor Vehicle Without Sufficient Insurance (Support)*

House Bill No. 5950, *An Act Requiring Junk Dealers to Require Proof of Identification of Persons from Whom Property is Received (Support)*


Many crime victims become extremely frustrated with the criminal justice system upon learning that the offender responsible for the motor vehicle accident that involved them was operating without a valid driver's license, registration or insurance. This population of crime victims may suffer a variety of losses, including lost time from work due to injury, rental car expenses and an increase to their insurance premiums, especially in cases where the offender did not have insurance.

The most important thing to remember when considering whether to increase the penalties for those accused of repeatedly committing motor vehicle offenses such as those mentioned above is that if not for the offender's repeated criminal behavior, innocent, law abiding crime victims would not suffer the sometimes life changing damages. Additionally, the lack of sufficient penalties for motor vehicle violations that impact innocent victims has no deterrent value on the repeat offender. I strongly urge the Committee's favorable action on Proposed Senate Bill No. 818 and Proposed House Bill No. 6131.

House Bill No. 5950 will improve the ability of law enforcement to identify and locate individuals attempting to profit off stolen merchandise later sold to junk dealers. Legitimate junk dealers will benefit as well as it will be more likely that the merchandise brought to them for sale will not be stolen if the individual selling the merchandise has to provide identifying information. I urge the Committee's favorable report on House Bill No. 5950.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,


Michelle Cruz, Esq.
State Victim Advocate